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A
LETTER
FROM A

Minister in *Norfolk*

TO HIS
PARISHIONERS:

CONCERNING

Their Duty,

- I. *Toward God.*
- II. *Toward their Governours.*
- III. *Toward their Neighbours.*
- IV. *Toward themselves and Families.*

L O N D O N :

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My Dear Brethren!

HAVING lately dispersed among you the *Pastoral Letter* which, pursuant to the Archbishop's Advice to all the Clergy under his Charge, was Published by some Worthy *Ministers* about *Bedford and Buckingham*.

I thought I cou'd not better express my regard to their Pious Example, the direction of my Superiours, and the good of your Souls; than by following it with some particular Instructions of my own, about the means of securing your Eternal Salvation, which I hope that Excellent Letter has awakened you to a due Sense of, and Concern for:

And this I shall do, by offering you some short Rules for the ordering your Behaviour.

I. Toward God.

II. Toward your Governours.

III. Toward your Neighbours.

IV. Toward your Selves and Families.

The whole of your behaviour toward God may be considered under that which we call the Worship of him, and you have been so often instructed in the great reasonableness of paying him this, upon the account of his Adorable Attributes of power, Wisdom, Goodness, Justice, Mercy, Truth, as well as you own derivation from him, and continual dependance on him; that I shall suppose you fully persuaded of the Duty, and only endeavour to lead you on to the due and acceptable performance of it.

Begin then in the Morning as soon as you are up, to Adore the Gracious Providence and Mercy of God, for having preserved you from the dangers of the Night, refreshed you with sleep, and for bringing you in view of another Day; consider what is likely to be the business of it, as long as you have it, what dangers of cut-

ing it off, or suffering in it, you may meet with, and what temptations you may be exposed to; what Evils you are to avoid, and what Good you may and ought to do; whose Welfare and Happiness you are to pray for, as a Member of the Catholick Church, and this particular Branch of it, as a Subject of this Kingdom, as a Parent, Master, or Mistress of a Family, Child or Servant.

Warm your Souls with due Apprehensions of the infinite Power, Wisdom and Goodness of God, manifested in the Creation and Preservation of the World; but especially affect your selves with a deep sense of his inexpressible Mercy, in sending his only Son to repair the decays of our fallen Nature, and thro' his Meritorious Sufferings and all-sufficient Righteousness, offering to be reconciled to us miserable Sinners:

Prepare your Hearts to pray for this acceptance with him, by humble thoughts of your own unworthiness, and the consideration of your Saviour's powerful intercession for you at God's right hand. And then before any worldly Cares intrude to divert you, retire by your selves, and reverently on your Knees, with serious attention and hearty Affection, perform your *Morning Devotions*.

When that is over, remember that you are to avoid those Temptations you have prayed against, and to practise to the utmost of your power, those Vertues and Graces you have asked for: Then follow your Vocation and Business, in Truth and Righteousness, in which whilst you are honestly employ'd, you cannot want proper Matter for Holy Thoughts and Ejaculations: Almost every thing that occurs to your Observation, will give you fresh occasion to admire the Excellency and Perfections of the Divine Being. Even the Plow-man and Day-labourer has constant Objects before him, to raise his Veneration of God, by beholding the Frame and Continuance, the Beauty and use of his Creatures, from the Sun in the Heavens, to the Dust on the Earth.

And such a care to turn all that occurs in the Day, to this Religious Use, will keep you from a croud of vain and trifling Thoughts, and be the best preparation for your

your *Evening-Devotion*, which you ought not to omit the performance of in private, tho' you have joyn'd in Family Prayer; for besides this, you must be alone, to recollect your particular Failings, Passions, and Miscarriages, what Dangers you have escaped, what good you have received, especially as to your Spiritual concerns, think of these things, and make them the subject of your serious meditation, that you may dispose your Souls to a holy and acceptable offering up of your Evening-Service and when that duty is over, compose your selves to rest under the hopes of its being accepted, casting all your Care upon him who careth for you, and who alone is able to make you sleep and dwell in safety.

In the constant practice of these private Duties, you are to go on to the more solemn Exercise of your Religion in the publick Worship of God. To which *Time and Place* are so necessary, and they are so well provided for by the Excellent Order of our Church, that I cannot doubt but you approve the Appointment: And tho' to the sorrow of all good Men, Piety and Devotion are fallen so low, that we cannot prevail on the generality of People to spare so much time from their Worldly Affairs, which yet constantly need the Blessing of God, as to joyn in his Worship the Weeks, of *Law*, and those few *Holy-days* we have in the Year: And tho' we can much less hope to persuade them to a daily attendance on the Service of the Church; yet it is much to be wished, they wou'd be induced to be more frequently at it, and I will hope that of you, both in order to the better success of your temporal Concerns, and the better preparing your selves, for a due observance of the *Lord's Day*, which is so small a part of your time, that the Profanation of it will be the greater Reproach, and a higher Contempt of those Laws both of God and Man, which require it to be kept *Holy*.

That you may so keep it, do not over-burden your selves with business on the Saturday-Night, but get a little more than ordinary leisure for your Evening-Meditations and Prayers, and go to your rest in good time,

time, that you may be the better enabled to be early in the Duties of the approaching Day; begin it with grateful reflections upon the Creation and Redemption of the World, the Fruits and Benefits of our Saviour's Resurrection to all faithful Christians; of which this Day is designed for a weekly Commemoration, and let these thoughts enlarge your Private Devotion. When that is perform'd, and the necessary affairs of your Family are put in order, set your Children and Servants to Reading the *Holy Scriptures*, the *whole Duty of Man*, or some other good Book to dispose them to be the more serious at Church; and then go with them thither, that you may be all there at the beginning of Divine Service. Leave all your Worldly Cares and Thoughts behind, and carry no Dogs with you to the defiling of that Holy place, or the disturbance of the Congregation. When you enter into the Church humbly on your knees adore that God, into whose more immediate Presence you come: Offer your hearty thanks for the blessing of another Opportunity of making your Publick Addresses to him; beg that his Grace may accompany your Prayers, and so assist your Minister in the discharge of his Office, that it may be to the benefit of all the Congregation. Joyn in the *Confession*, *Lord's Prayer*, *Creed*, and the short *Suffrages* as the Rubrick directs in a grave and reverent manner, not with an over-loud voice, but so as to be conveniently heard; do not repeat the *Absolution* which belongs to the Minister only, but harken attentively to it, and silently joyn in the Petition for Repentance at the end of it. Let your Thoughts rather than your Voice go along with your Minister in the other *Collects*, but be sure to avoid being heard repeating before him, to the interruption of your Neighbour's Devotion, and perhaps the hinderance of your Minister too; do nothing to be greatly observ'd, but be an Example only of modest and humble attention, maintaining a constant seriousness thro' every part of the Service, without affectation. Shut out as much as is possible, all wandering Thoughts, and to that end take care to avoid all wandring

ding behaviour; do not look out for occasion to make Salutations, nor give any in the time of your Prayers; let it not be your business to observe who come into the Church, nor what dress they have on; never allow your self in idle gazing about, or needless whispering to any; nor on the other hand give way to supineness and sleep: But consider who it is you are presented before, and what business you are assembled about, Remember that God, and his Holy Angels observe you, and that your Eternal Welfare is the matter in hand. Think how hard it is with all your care to keep your Souls in that Frame they shou'd be, and how much therefore it stands you in stead, to take all that you can, and render these approaches to God as effectual as possible, to those Excellent Ends, for which you are required to make them.

When the Publick Worship of the Day is ended in this regular manner, take care that the rest of the time be employ'd in the things that are suitable to it, such as the Offices of Charity, whether by Alms, or visiting the Sick, or those who want your Comfort, Advice, or Re-proof; endeavouring that all your Conversation with others on this Day especially, may tend to their improvement in some Christian Grace and Knowledge or other. Let there be Reading in your Families in the Evening, as was advis'd in the Morning, and let an account be taken of what has been read and heard that Day, that both Readers and Hearers may be the better for it, and let a Prayer for the Blessing of God upon the whole, be added to the Evening Devotion that is to conclude this Day.

But over and above the constant Duties upon the ordinary returns of this Day; the Celebration of the Lord's Supper appointed to be had upon some Sundays and other Solemn Days, as it is alway, upon the three great Festivals, of *Christmas-Day*, *Easter-Sunday* and *Whit-Sunday*, in memory of our Blessed Saviour's *Nativity*, *Resurrection*, and the coming of the *Holy-Ghost*, and therefore against these, a greater preparation is required: In order to their being duly observ'd some time

must be set apart before, for a strict examination of your Hearts and Lives, for the Humble Confession of your Sins, and Expression of Sorrow for them, for imploring the Mercy of God in the Pardon of them, and for settling your resolutions of forsaking them. For these Ends you ought to read over by your selves the *Psalms, Lessons, Epistles, and Gospels*, on those Solemn Occasions, which will raise in your Minds due apprehensions of those great things God has wrought for your Souls, and furnish you with Meditations suitable to the work you are going about, such as will make it a Blessing to you. What I have here advised, about your reading part of the Divine Service at home, upon these particular Occasions, is useful to be practised upon all other Opportunities, as you can never hope to put up your Prayers in Publick, or hear the Word of God at any time to so good an Effect, as when you have considered before-hand what it is you are to hear, and pray for.

And for your further help in these matters, I refer you to some of those Excellent Discourses that have been Published about the Holy Communion and other Religious Duties, which you either have by you, or may upon easie terms be supply'd with: And God grant you may take care to fix them well in your Minds, and follow those Pious Directions, with that Seriousness and Affection which become Christians convinced of the value of their Immortal Souls, and the reasonableness of giving all diligence to make their Calling and Election sure, by a devout Application of themselves, to all the parts of their Religion, that are set before them, as means to it, or pledges of it: Always remembering, that the end of Religion, is to make you better in the whole course of your Lives and to direct your behaviour in every Relation in which you stand in this World; as I am to shew you in the next place how it is to be ordered.

2. Towards your Governours; and here I must begin with the King who is your Supreme Governour upon Earth, both in Church and State, to whom I hope you will not be the less dutiful, either for those civil dissensions that have been amongst us since his reigning over

us, or for the imposition of Taxes that have been upon us. Differences about Civil Obedience have been in all Reigns, and I fear always will be, as we cannot expect, that all Men should either be of honest Designs, or of good Understanding in the grounds and nature of Government; tho' it is to be wished that all English-men, were in the frame of their own, for then they would value their happiness in living under so excellent a Constitution as this, and so good a Preserver of it as His Majesty is.

God is the Supreme Governor of the whole World, and all the Powers on Earth have ever been, and still are, either by his actual Appointment, or over-ruling Providence, and to either of these kinds of Powers, Submission is due for his sake, 1 Pet. 2. 13. and by his Command, Rom. 13. (and Prayers are to be put up for them) *that we may lead quiet and peaceable lives in all Godliness and Honesty,* 1 Tim. 2. 1, 2. And agreeable to this are the Laws of this Kingdom, 1 Hen. VII. and the particular Doctrine of this Church, (1 Hom. against Rebellion) which ought in all reason to silence the disputes of Private People about the Titles of Princes, which they are not fit Judges of, and can come to no satisfaction about; if they will not acquiesce in the determination of those to whom the Consideration of such things belong, as entrusted with the care and good of the whole. As little reason there is to be uneasy under the Government, upon the account of the Taxes, which have been laid upon you by the free act of those that represented you in Parliament, and are at all times more or less necessary to all Governments, but sometimes the Publick Safety cannot be maintain'd without a great increase of the usual Burden, which yet is light in comparison of the Mischiefs that would otherwise follow. And if you, who profess to love your Country, and this Church of which you are Members, did impartially consider, in how much worse a condition both would have been, had not His Majesty undertaken and gone thro' all that he has done for us, and had not this charge been upon us; you would see reason to bless God for having delivered you out of all your fears, at so little expence. instead of murmuring at what you have born, which is
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now wearing off, and from the occasion of which, while it was at the highest, many parts of the Nation, and this among others receiv'd an advantage: But take things at the worst, what proportion does that part of your present Revenue, which you have paid to the support of the War, that is now so happily ended, bear to the seizing your Estates, the loss of your Liberties, and the hazard at least of your Lives for the sake of Religion, and your keeping to a good Conscience? All these things you know were greatly apprehended by the generality of the Nation, and not without evident reason. Nor cou'd we have escaped in any Humane appearance, those sad Persecutions under which many of a Neighbouring Nation have groaned, if God had not raised up the King to protect us, and disposed the Body of the People to stand by him, till he accomplished the Peace. Since then so much has been wrought for you, and you see the fruits of your labour and charge in being settled in safety, defended in your Religion, and Governed by Laws of your own; I cannot but hope you will make His Majesty's Government easy by paying him that Honour, his Actions for you, have procured him abroad, and doing what in you lies, to make his endeavours of promoting Piety and Virtue at home so prosperous and effectual, that there may be some ground to hope for the continuance of that Peace, which under God we owe to his Valour and Care. And unless you do this, there is reason to fear the Attempts which our Adversaries of the Romish Superstition are still making upon us, who will take advantage of all your Discontents, neglects of God's Worship, and other Immortalities, to lead you into a more servile Subjection, a more formal way of Religion, and easier hopes of Pardon for Sin, all which will be your undoing. For the better prevention of this, let me advise you in the next place, to Obey them that have the Spiritual Rule among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you, and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake, inasmuch as they watch for your Souls. As the Bishop under whose Inspection you live; and the Minister to whom he has committed the particular Care of you

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you, and let it not offend you that I put my self among your Governours, which I do not, as pretending to have *dominion over your Faith*, but as desiring to be a *Helper of your Joy*. And this I cannot better promote, than by recommending to you a sincere regard of him, who is to Pray for you, and instruct you in the Gospel of Christ, who is to administer those Sacraments to you, from which you hope for Salvation, and to direct, assist and comfort you upon the Bed of Sicknes, and at the Hour of Death. Sure you need not be persuaded to do Justice, at least to a Person in this Office among you, nor desired not to think the worse of me for Exhorting you to pay him his Due, without difficulty, or tempting him to go to Law for that maintenance without which he cannot do his Duty among you, and which he cannot recover this way, without drawing some prejudice upon his Holy Vocation. Consider this for your own as well as his sake, and prevent the many Evils which must follow your endeavouring to defraud him of what is as much his Right, as any thing else is your own. Be so far from this, as to make a him convenient allowance over and above what he can claim as a Debt, if your Lot shou'd fall in a Parish, where very small Legal Provision is made, as it is even to the requiring your pity in most Market-Towns. When this is your Case, follow the Example of *London*, which among other marks of its Glory is to be praised for this, that it provides a decent support for those Ministers that labour among them, and by that means is furnished with such, as every way deserve their reward. Let another part of your supporting your Minister be the care of his Reputation, which cannot be lessened, but you will also be sufferers by it, and in the more honour he is, the more good he will be able to do you. Of this all Religions have ever been sensible, and it wou'd therefore be the greatest reproach of our Church, if her Members should stand by themselves, in sinking, or so much as neglecting the Credit of those who are to officiate among them in things pertaining to God. Shou'd you be so unfortunate as to live under a Minister, who did not walk according to his Character,

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shew your concern by a friendly telling him of it alone with Meekness and Fear; if he does not reform upon this, take two or three Witnesses with you that are sober and serious, and if notwithstanding all this, he persists in his course, acquaint his Governours with it in a regular manner, and desire their Cure of such an Offence. All good Men of the Order will commend you for this, if you do not in the mean time shew a Prejudice to the Doctrine he teaches, and carry your dislike of his personal Conduct to the Office he bears, and all those that act in the same.

This wou'd be very unreasonable, considering he is a Man like your selves, and perhaps of greater infirmities, which do not really lessen the business that is committed unto him. And it wou'd be very unjust to form a judgment of the rest of his Profession from him; since no other Order of Men do think themselves fairly represented from the private miscarriages of some particular Persons among them. Consider the end of your Minister's business, and you will never treat him to the hindrance of that, nor give others encouragement to despise his Commission, because he does not always discharge it, in that manner he shou'd, but you will preserve his Authority by all Charitable covering or excusing his Faults, that some good may come of it to you and your Neighbours, tho' he shou'd not happen to be the better for it himself. And so I proceed to the next part of my Advice, which concerns your Behaviour.

3. Toward your Neighbours, under which Character, you are to treat all those whom the Providence of God shall at any time bring in your way, as far as the Offices of Humanity and Christian Charity go; but you are more especially to look upon as your Neighbours those who live near you, in the same Parish, or with whom you have frequent intercourse in the Affairs of your Life; towards whom that you may conduct your selves as you ought, you must in the first Place, study to be quiet, and to do your own Business, as the best means of keeping you from doing Evil, and enabling you to do

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Good to those about you; and that you may be still the
furer to do no Evil to them; take care not to think any
of them, beyond the plain evidence of Things, and never
allow your selves to aggravate that. Speak evil of no
Man, how justly soever, but when a good and charitable,
and almost indispensable Occasion requires it. Bear
little Injuries, and do not return Evil for the greatest, be-
yond the necessity of a just Defence; give no heed to
Tale-bearers, or Busy-bodies in other Mens Matters, but
discourage as much as you can, all invidious Whisperings
and Backbitings; to be sure repeat none to the kindling
of Strife, but quench all the sparks of it, where-ever you
find they arise, and heal what Breaches you can, by soft-
ning things on both Sides, and working the displeased
Parties to a Temper of Love and Reconciliation. Dispose
all you Converse with, to do justly by one another, and
do justly by all Men your selves, that you may neither
give occasion to Quarrels, nor suffer any to begin, where
you can possibly prevent it. Give the Labourer his Hire,
and pay all, what by any kind of Right becomes their
due, defraud no Man, do wrong to none, either in their
Estates, Relations, or Names; but do unto all Men, as you
would they shou'd do unto you, giving none any just rea-
son to complain of you. *If it be possible, as much as lieth
in you live peaceably with all Men.* But let not your fear of
offending, hinder you from giving any of your Brethren a
necessary Reproof in a Christian way, or from bringing
him to Punishment, if he will not be reclaim'd by kind
Admonition: Be not afraid of being call'd Informers,
when the Eternal Good of your Neighbours that are
Faulty, and the Peace and Comfort and Vertue of those
that are innocent are nearly concern'd; some Vices are
not to be born, and their going without any restraint will
spread the Infection; discover and convict those that are
guilty of such, as you would a Thief or Murderer in
whose Neighbourhood, you cannot be safe. *If a Man
indeed be overtaken in a fault, restore such a one in the
Spirit of Meekness, considering your selves lest you also be
tempted.* But suffer not the Holy Name of God to be
Blasphemed, or boldly Profaned in your presence, with-

out expressing your just dislike and abhorrence of it; by such Reprehensions, as the Circumstances of Places and Persons will bear, and Accusing those to the Magistrate, as will not be so corrected: Nor let the Adulterer, or Whoremonger go on without due Censure, for such Horrid and mischievous Sins, only take care your Complaints of this kind proceed not from private Resentments, but from a Concern for the Honour of God, and the good of your Neighbours. And that this may appear unto all, abstain strictly from all those Faults you pretend to discourage in others, and be constant Examples of those Virtues you wou'd recommend; let your whole Conversation be such as becometh the Gospel of Christ, and strive to adorn the Doctrine of our Saviour in all Things that you say or do. Take particular care to give those you have Answered for in Baptism, good impressions of it, that they may be led to the faithful Performance of their own Vows, by observing your Conscientious Discharge of yours, and your more especial Concern to make those Religious who do more immediately belong to you; which brings me to the last Advice I proposed touching:

4/ Your Behaviour toward your selves and Families. As to what touches your selves, so much of it has naturally fallen under the foregoing Heads that I shall here recommend to you, the chief only of those personal Virtues, without which you can never be sure of discharging your other Duties, I mean *Humility, Temperance, and Diligence*. Have always sober and modest Thoughts of your selves, that you may not be Tempted to meddle with things that are too high for you, nor to withhold your Obedience from those to whom it is due, but may walk with all lowliness and meekness, observing the Rules of the place where you live. And that you may not be suddenly carried away into the Transgression of any of the Laws you are under, take care to be Temperate in all things, in drink particular, that you do not drown your Reason, and transport your selves into furious and unmanly Passions; besides the Sin of this Excess, it exposes you to all other follies, and dangers of several kinds, to the hazard of Quarrels and whatever mischiefs may follow

follow from them; the Evil consequences of drunkenness, are too many to be here insisted upon, it impairs the health of the Body, sullies the Reputation, wastes the Fortune, obstructs Business, and is all these, and many other ways prejudicial to the Souls of Men: Avoid it therefore by all means, and Idleness as a great occasion of it; every Man has enough to do, if he will but think of it, without his mispending his Money and Time. Be diligent therefore in your Callings, that you may shut out all such disorders, and may have to give to all that need without wronging your Family, who are to stand first in your Care. If you are in Wedlock, be sure that the Vows of Marriage be strictly observed, and that that Holy State be rendered as Comfortable as mutual Fidelity and Kindness with Religion can make it, and nothing can make you happier in this World or put you into a better condition for the next, than a concurrence of these. Your Children are to have the next place in your Thoughts, and let them have as much of your Company as you can, no body else being either so well affected towards them, or having such a concern in their behaving themselves as they should. Engage them by all the Methods of Prudent Kindness to love you, that you may have a fuller Authority with them, which you are always to use for their good: Take all the fair occasions of instructing them with that sweetness of Temper, as may encourage their further enquiries to the increase of their Knowledge; lay the Foundation of their improvements this way, in giving them as they are capable of it, right and worthy Notions of God, his Power, Wisdom, and Goodness; possess them with an early sense of his Eye being over them in every place, of his approving all their good Actions, and observing with displeasure their bad. That so they may always think of him with Fear, and speak of him with Honour; Represent to them the satisfaction and glory that attends Piety and Vertue at present, as well as the infinite Reward they will meet with hereafter; on the other hand, shew them the Trouble and Shame that follows a sinful course of Life in this World,

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and the dreadful consequences of ~~their~~ or their Confirmation in these things, let them be taught as soon as they are able to learn, the nature of the Vow made in their Baptism, and the other principles of Religion, as they are laid down in the Catechism; that at fit age they may take it upon themselves, and receive the blessing of God by the Bishop to establish them in it. Give them in all things as good an Education as your condition will bear, and breed them up to such Employments as are suitable to your Circumstances, their Capacity and Inclinations: While they are in your House teach them, to be obedient to their Parents, and let nothing irregular appear in your own conducts, to lessen your Authority with them. Use them to a great modesty of behaviour toward all Men, especially toward their Superiours of any kind, and never suffer them to jest or scoff at the Age, Weakness, Infirmities, or Poverty of any; but teach them compassion in all these Cases, and often make them the distributors of your Charity, to those that want: Accustom them to what is Ingenious and Manly, and to moderate hardship, that they may never decline thro' softness; what is fit for them to do. Get the best Companions for them you can, that they be not corrupted by those that come to divert them: And the better to secure them against this, Watch over their Passions, that in particular which you find most predominant in them, and rather lead it off another way, than set your self directly against it, unless when it has actually broke out into some Excess; and then you must come to Correction, but with such Mildness and Gravity, that they may be sensible it proceeds not from any Humour, or disorderly Anger in you, but from calm judgment, and tenderness for them, which is to be shewn by continuing a prudent displeasure, till you see they begin to amend. When by this care you have brought them into the World with all the advantage you can; provide for their Marriage in a way agreeable to them, making the Vertue, and suitable temper of the Persons the Chief ground of your Choice, including always an agreement of Opinion about the Worship of God,

God, without which the peace and unity of Wedlock can scarce be maintain'd, nor the Children of it, brought up in that regular way of Religion, which their welfare requires: But in the disposal of your Children this way, never force them against their declared Inclinations, nor oppose theirs to the utmost, but when they are very unreasonable indeed, and plainly destructive. After, and with your Children, your Servants must be also considered as part of your Charge, and have all the opportunities and means of Religion that have been proposed for the others; respect being had to their different Relation, and Business. But tho' the Service they do you is part of their Duty to God, yet you must not let it so engross all their time, as to leave them none, or but little for that which is properly so. It is your Advantage as much as Duty, to have them Religious; for besides the Comforts you will have in making them so, it will engage them to be more faithful to you in the discharge of their Trust. And their being made sensible that they are to give an Account hereafter of their behaviour here, will make them serve you, not with Eye-service as Men-pleasers, but with singleness of Heart fearing God. Charge them therefore to be constant in their Morning and Evening-Devotions, and keep them to a Religious observance of the Lord's day, according to the Advice I gave you above. Encourage their Learning to Read and Write, and allow them a convenient time for it: Exhort them to spend their spare Hours in the plainest part of the Holy Scripture, and in other good Books, that they may understand their Religion, and having been Confirmed in it by the Bishop may be further prepared to receive the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Caution them against all Evil Company, especially such as have formerly been Servants, and are now Idle and Dissolute; because they above others will endeavour to spoil them, and make them such as themselves, Tempting them to Lye and Swear, and it may be to Steal, and go on in such ways of Destruction. That you may the better keep your Servants in their Duty, make them love you, by using them well in all

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other respects, providing things necessary for them, and punctually paying them their Wages, treating them with gentleness upon little Miscarriages, and forbearing threatening without great occasion, remembering that you your selves have a Master in Heaven. Let both your Children and them see that you think often upon him, and treat his Name, and whatever belongs to him, with that Reverence you require of them: Convince them by a serious behaviour throughout, that you Endeavour to shew them the Way in which you would have them to go, by walking stedfastly in it your selves, and beg the Blessing of God upon all that you do, as well in your private as your Family-Prayers, which for the sake of your selves, your Children, and Servants, you are to be regular in, that you may preserve this Duty of owning your common dependance on God, from the hazard of being omitted, by being left at uncertainty; that you may at such time, see your Family together, and use them to order, and have opportunity of giving them any common instructions, when their united Devotions have prepared them to receive it with the purer affection. These and many more Advantages there are in keeping up Family-Prayers, for which you may be provided by some proper Collects out of the Common-Prayer-Book, or other Books put out for that purpose. Whatever Prayers you take, I beseech God to bless you in the use of them, and that I may not seem to be wholly wanting to your Assistance in this matter I have subjoyned to this Letter two or three Forms, which with very little alteration may serve for Private, or Family-Prayers

A Morning-Prayer.

O Glorious and most merciful God! I adore thy Infinite Majesty; and beg leave to offer my most humble Thanks for thy great goodness towards me, from the first Moment of my Being to this very Minute: For that thou hast been graciously pleased to watch over me this Night, and bring me safe to the beginning of this Day. Grant that the consideration of thy great Mercy towards me, may work in me a thankful disposition of Mind, and that a due sense of my own unworthiness of such undeserved Favours may lead me to a sincere and speedy Repentance, acceptably express'd by Reformation and Amendment, that I may forsake, as well as confess my Sins, and be effectually prevail'd on by all the sweet and powerful Motives of my Holy Religion, to deny all ungodliness and worldly Lusts, and to live godly, righteously and soberly in this corrupt and sinful World, with the well-grounded Hopes and Expectations of a Glorious Inheritance hereafter with the Sons of Light.

Let thy Holy Spirit in all things direct and rule my Heart, fortify my Soul with thy Heavenly Grace against those Sins and Passions to which I am most expos'd; cleanse me from my secret Faults, and grant that presumptuous Sins may never have dominion over me. Keep me ever mindful of thy Presence, of the shortness and uncertainty of my Life, and of the great Day of Accounts; that I may be evermore watchful and circumspect in my ways, that I offend not Thee, my God God, wrong my Neighbour, or injure my own Soul in Thought, Word, or Deed. Endue me with an humble Resignation of my Will and Affections to thy Divine disposal, and fit me for every State and alteration of Condition, that thou thro' thy good Providence shalt be pleased to call me to, more especially for the Hour of Death, and the Day of Judgment. Make me evermore to love what thou dost Command, and heartily to desire a participation of thy heavenly Promises, that so among all the various changes of this frail State, my Heart may there be surely fix'd where true Joys are to be found.

In Mercy be pleas'd, O Lord, to hear, and accept my humble Prayers for the whole Race of Mankind, for all Christian Churches

Churches, more especially for this whereof I am an unworthy Member. For the Preservation, long Life, and Happiness of our King, for thy Blessing on the Royal Family, and all in Authority under his Sacred Majesty, both in Church and State, for all the Ministers of thy Holy Word and Sacraments, more especially for him to whose care my Soul is committed, that they may all of them in their several Stations be Influenc'd by thy Divine Grace in all their Actions and Undertakings, and in the whole Course of their Lives consult and promote thy Glory, the Honour and Flourishing State of thy Church, the encouragement of Piety and Vertue, the Happiness of this Kingdom and the Eternal Salvation of their own Souls.

Let thy Blessings descend on my Friends and Relations, reward all their Kindness to me a Thousand fold. Convert and pardon my Enemies. Bless me in my Business and Employment this Day, that I may discharge my self uprightly, and inoffensively toward thee my God, and all Mankind. Preserve me from all evil Temptations and Dangers, furnish my Thoughts with such Holy Meditations, as may tend to the improvement of my Spiritual State, go in and out with me, and be my merciful God, give me Grace in every thing to approve my self thy Faithful Servant, cheerfully performing every good Work that Thou wouldest have done, and so passing thro' Things Temporal, that I may in thy due time, have a Portion in a Glorious Eternity. These things, and whatever else Thou in thy infinite Wisdom knowest most necessary for me, which either for my Ignorance I cannot, or Unworthiness dare not ask, vouchsafe, Gracious God, to Grant me for the sake, and Merits of my Blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who has Taught me thus to pray, Our Father, &c.

A Prayer to be added on Sunday-Morning.

O Holy and Eternal God, be pleased to accept of my humble thanks for giving me the hopes of spending another Lord's Day in thy more immediate service. Pardon I beseech thee all the Sins and Miscalriages of the Week, and my Life past. Grant me Grace to keep this day in a Religious and devout manner, in some measure proportionable to the Holiness of it, and those great Benefits we commemorate in our Lord Jesus's glorious

glorious Resurrection, whereby he compleated the merciful work of our Redemption. That I may lay aside all vain and worldly Thoughts, that I may rise from the grave of Sin to the Life of Righteousness; adoring thy Perfections, admiring thy Mercies, and pursuing the interest of thy eternal Kingdom. Grant thy Blessing and gracious influence may be with all Christian Assemblies that meet to serve thee this Day: more especially that wherewith I am to joyn, that with pure Hearts, and inflamed Affections we may worship and Adore thee our good and merciful God. Grant that our sins may not hang as Clouds between Heaven and us, to hinder the effectual ascending of our Prayers, or the descending of thy Blessings on us and our service. Especially I pray a gracious Assistance may be granted our Minister in a faithful, and successful discharge of the several parts of his Holy Office. Put all our Souls into a due frame, and diligent attention in all the parts of our Publick Duty; so that thy Name may be truly glorified, thy Church edify'd, and our Souls nourish'd with the saving Truth of the Christian Doctrine, built up in an Holy Faith, Humble Hope and Charity, on the Rock of our Salvation, and evermore influenced with the refreshing Graces, and Blessings of thy Holy Spirit, till we come to be Translated to keep an eternal Sabbath in the Kingdom of our glorified Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

An Evening Prayer.

O Eternal and most Holy God, I humbly beseech thee look down with the Eye of Mercy and Compassion upon me thy polluted Creature, who am not worthy to look up to Heaven, or to make my approaches to thy Glorious Majesty, whom I have grievously offended by my so often repeated Sins and Follies. Against the tender Motions of thy Holy Spirit; against the serious Checks of my own Conscience; against my former Resolutions; against the gracious Offers of Mercy, and terrible Threats of Judgments, have I perversely broken thy Holy Laws: So that if thou should'st be severe to mark what I have done amiss, how am I able to appear before thee! But O thou preserver of Men, with thee there is mercy, that thou may'st be fear'd: I humbly prostrate my self before

before thee, begging for thine infinite Compassion, for the great Merits and Sufferings of thy dear Son our Lord Jesus Christ, that thou wouldst not enter into Judgment with thy Servant, or be severe in punishing as I deserve. In mercy to my poor Soul raise in me a due sight and sense of my Sins, hearty contrition and godly sorrow, holy and steadfast purposes of amendment, that I may give a bill of divorce to all my corrupt and darling Affections, that I may never more be at an agreement with any thing that shall have the least tendency to deprive me of the Love and Favour of thee my gracious God. Let the Strength and Power of thy Divine Grace be manifested in my weakness. And wherever by my Nature, habit of Living, Company, or Business, I am most liable to Temptations and danger, there be pleas'd to strengthen me in doubling my care and watchfulness: There grant me the most Christian Courage, and thy special Aid. Raise my Affections to spiritual Objects, that I may improve the remaining Portion of my Life with all possible care and diligence for the making my Calling and Election sure. That I may on no account distrust thy Mercy, defer my Repentance, or depend on any vain confidence, but be continually working out my Salvation with Fear and Trembling, that I may be fit to die, when thou shalt be pleas'd to call for me.

I humbly pray, that the mercies of thy Gospel may be as extensive as thy Providence: That all the Nations of the World may be brought to the saving Knowledge of thy Truth; and that all who call on thy Name may depart from Iniquity. Unite all the Members of thy Church in soundness of Doctrine, Holiness of Life, and Brotherly Love. Especially, bless with the Dew of thy Heavenly Grace this part of thy Church whereof I am an unworthy Member; heal our Breaches, and make up all our Divisions, and unite us with one heart and mind to serve thee the Living God. Grant thy watchful Providence may evermore defend the Sacred Person of our King against all Conspiracies and Treasons, enlighten him with thy Grace, and Confirm him in thy Goodness, that thy Glory, the honour of Religion, encouragement of Piety, Vertue and Learning, the Peace and Happiness of his

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People may evermore be his aim; and after a long and happy Reign, Crown him with Immortal Happiness. Bless all those in Authority under him in Church and State, in the Religious, Conscientious, and Exemplary discharge of their Duties. Bless all Ranks and Conditions of Mankind, that they may live in thy Fear and die in thy Favour.

In Mercy look down upon all the Sons and Daughters of Affliction, thou knowest the Wants and Necessities of all People, and thou art a God All-sufficient, I beseech thee administer unto every one as Thou in thy Divine Wisdom knowest best, and most expedient for them, and grant that all thy fatherly Chastisements may tend to the welfare, and Salvation of their Souls.

Bless and reward all my Relations, Friends and Benefactors, and grant that my ways may be so pleasing to Thee, that even my Enemies may be at peace with me; however in mercy forgive them. And now Lord, accept of my unfeigned Thanks for the Mercies of this Day, and all my Life past, who notwithstanding my unworthiness hast hitherto been so patient toward me, that when thou might'st have long since justly consumed me, thou hast not so much as withdrawn thy goodness, nor punished my great abuse of these Earthly Blessings, by taking them from me. In much Mercy continue thy Favour and Loving-kindness towards me, and increase my Love and Obedience. Take me into thy merciful Care and Protection this Night and evermore, deliver me from the evil Suggestions of Satan, from the Deceits and Violence of Wicked Men, from all frightful Dreams and Snares of Darkness; Make my Sleep comfortable, and refreshing to me, and bless my Soul, whenever I awake, with pious Meditations, that thro' thy Mercy I may be raised in the Morning the better enabled to serve thee in my Calling and Employment in Truth and Righteousness. All which I humbly beg for the Sake and Mediation of thy dearly beloved Son my blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, in whose All-prevailing Name and Words, I conclude these my imperfect Prayers. Our Father, &c.

A Prayer to be added on Sunday-Evening.

Also O Lord our humble and hearty Thanks, not only for our Preservation this Day, but the blessed opportunity we have had in it; of assembling our selves before thee in the publick Ordinances of thy Church; for the advantages we have there enjoyed of making solemn confession of our Sins, and imploring thy Pardon, for the benefit of hearing thy Word, and the honour and joy of praising thy Name; For our being allowed and assisted in our putting up our Supplications and Prayers, for our Spiritual and Temporal Wants, and making Intercessions for others. Pardon, O Lord, the Wanderings and coldness of our publick and private Devotions, and our small improvements under these Great Blessings thou hast favoured us with. Let the sense of it make us more careful to profit under all that thou shalt hereafter vouchsafe us the return of, and let the Impressions thy Holy Spirit has made in us, this Day, grow every Day stronger upon us, and keep us more firmly in thy Obedience and Love, the rest of the Week, that so every Christian Sabbath we keep may make us still fitter to be received into thy Eternal Rest: Grant this O Lord, for the Sake of thy Son Christ Jesus, Amen.

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